New Jersey's Four-Tiered Approach to Volunteer Monitoring

Tier	Data Users	Data Use	Quality Needed
A. Environmental Education	• Participants • Students	• Promote stewardship • Educational purposes • Raise their level of understanding of watershed ecology	• Low level of rigor but use sound science • Wide variety of study designs are acceptable • Quality assurance recommended for educational purposes
B. Stewardship	• Participants • Watershed residents • Local decision makers	• Gain understanding of existing conditions and changes over time • Screen for and identify problems and positive attributes	• Low/medium level of rigor • Variety of study designs are acceptable • Internal quality assurance desirable • Training required
C. Community/ Watershed Assessment	• Participants • Local decision makers • Watershed associations • Environmental Organizations • Possibly DEP	• Assess current conditions • Track trends • Source track down of nonpoint source pollution	• Medium level of rigor • Data needs to reliably detect changes over time and space • Narrower range of protocols acceptable • Internal and external quality assurance • QAPP annually reviewed • Training and annually "refresher" training recommended
D. Indicators	• Participants • State decision makers, DEP • Local decision makers • Watershed associations • Environmental Organizations	• Assess current conditions and impairments • Supplement agency data collection • Research • Evaluate best management practices	• High level of rigor • Study designs and methods need to be equivalent and recognized by agencies using the data • Training and annual "refresher" training required • QAPP required • Annual approval of QAPP required • Audit by program manager and potential data users